

# Mario Bros.

***Mario Bros.*** (マリオブラザーズ *Mario Burazāzu*) is a platform game published and developed for arcades by Nintendo in 1983. It was created by Shigeru Miyamoto. It has been featured as a minigame in the *Super Mario Advance* series and numerous other games.*Mario Bros.* has been re-released for the Wii's, Nintendo 3DS's, and Wii U's Virtual Console services in Japan, North America, Europe and Australia.

In the game, Mario is portrayed as an Italian-American plumber who, along with his brother Luigi, has to defeat creatures that have been coming from the sewers. The gameplay focuses on Mario and Luigi exterminating the creatures by flipping them on their backs and kicking them away. The original versions of *Mario Bros.*—the arcade version and the Family Computer/Nintendo Entertainment System (FC/NES) version—were received positively by critics.

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## Gameplay



Screenshot of the original 1983 arcade version of*Mario Bros.*, showing Mario about to defeat a Shellcreeper.

*Mario Bros.* features two plumbers,<sup>[4]</sup> Mario and Luigi, having to investigate the sewers of New York after strange creatures have been appearing down there.<sup>[5]</sup> The objective of the game is to defeat all of the enemies in each phase. The mechanics of *Mario Bros.* involve only running and jumping. Unlike future *Mario* games, players cannot jump on enemies and squash them, unless they were already turned on their back. Each phase is a series of platforms with pipes at each corner

Mario Bros.	
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<span></span> <div>North American Arcade flyer</div>	
Developer(s)	Nintendo Research & Development 1
Publisher(s)	<div><div><span><span></span></span> WW: Nintendo</div><div><span><span></span></span> JP: Hudson Soft (PC-88)</div><div><span><span></span></span> NA: Atari, Inc. (Atari 2600, 5200)</div><div><span><span></span></span> Atari Corp. (Atari 7800, 8-bit)</div><div><span><span></span></span> EU: Ocean Software (European computers)</div></div>
Designer(s)	Shigeru Miyamoto Gunpei Yokoi
Composer(s)	Yukio Kaneoka <sup>[1]</sup>
Series	<i>Mario</i> franchise
Platform(s)	Arcade
Release	July 14, 1983
Genre(s)	Platforming
Mode(s)	Single-player, multiplayer
Cabinet	Upright
CPU	Zilog Z80 @ 3.072 MHz I8039 @ 0.73 MHz
Sound	DAC, samples
	Horizontal

of the screen, along with an object called a "POW" block in the center. Phases use wraparound, meaning that enemies and players that go off to one side will reappear on the opposite side.

<b>Display</b>	orientation, raster, 256 × 224 resolution
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The player gains points by defeating multiple enemies consecutively and can participate in a bonus round to gain more points. Enemies are defeated by kicking them over once they have been flipped on their back. This is accomplished by hitting the platform the enemy is on directly beneath them. If the player allows too much time to pass after doing this, the enemy will flip itself back over, changing in color and increasing speed. Each phase has a certain number of enemies, with the final enemy immediately changing color and increasing to maximum speed. Hitting a flipped enemy from underneath causes it to right itself and start moving again, but it does not change speed or color

There are four enemies: the Shellcreeper, which simply walks around; the Sidestepper, which requires two hits to flip over; the Fighter Fly, which moves by jumping and can only be flipped when it is touching a platform; and the Slipice, which turns platforms into slippery ice. When bumped from below, the Slipice dies immediately instead of flipping over; these enemies do not count toward the total number that must be defeated to complete a phase. All iced platforms return to normal at the start of each new phase.

The "POW" block flips all enemies touching a platform or the floor when a player hits it from below. It can be used three times before it disappears. In the *Super Mario Bros. 3* in-game Player-Versus-Player version of this minigame, each of the three uses causes the opponent to lose a card and all the enemies to be flipped over. Another feature in this small remake is that the pipes are straight, occasionally spitting out large fireballs at the two plumbers. When any enemy type except a Slipice is defeated, a coin appears and can be picked up for bonus points; however, the phase ends as soon as the last enemy is defeated.

As the game progresses, elements are added to increase the difficulty. Fireballs either bounce around the screen or travel directly from one side to the other, and icicles form under the platforms and fall loose. Bonus rounds give the players a chance to score extra points and lives by collecting coins without having to deal with enemies; the "POW" block regenerates itself on each of these screens.

## Development

*Mario Bros.* was created by Shigeru Miyamoto and Gunpei Yokoi, two of the lead developers for the video game *Donkey Kong*. In *Donkey Kong*, Mario dies if he falls too far. Yokoi suggested to Miyamoto that he should be able to fall from any height, which Miyamoto was not sure of, thinking that it would make it "not much of a game." He eventually agreed, thinking it would be okay for him to have some superhuman abilities. He designed a prototype that had Mario "jumping and bouncing around", which he was satisfied with. The element of combating enemies from below was introduced after Yokoi suggested it, observing that it would work since there were multiple floors. However, it proved to be too easy to eliminate enemies this way, which the developers fixed by requiring players to touch the enemies after they've been flipped to defeat them. This was also how they introduced the turtle as an enemy, which they conceived as an enemy that could only be hit from below.<sup>[6]</sup> Because of Mario's appearance in *Donkey Kong* with overalls, a hat, and a thick moustache, Shigeru Miyamoto thought that he should be a plumber as opposed to a carpenter, and designed this game to reflect that.<sup>[7]</sup> Another contributing factor was the game's setting: it was a large network of giant pipes, so they felt a change in occupation was necessary for him.<sup>[5]</sup>

A popular story of how Mario went from Jumpman to Mario is that an Italian-American landlord, Mario Segale, had barged in on Nintendo of America's staff to demand rent, and they decided to name Jumpman after him. Miyamoto also felt that the best setting for this game was New York because of its "labyrinthine subterranean network of sewage pipes."<sup>[5]</sup> The pipes were inspired by several manga, which Miyamoto states feature waste grounds with pipes lying around. In this game, they were used in a way to allow the enemies to enter and exit the



Shigeru Miyamoto (pictured) and Gunpei Yokoi collaborated on the design of *Mario Bros.*

stage through them to avoid getting enemies piled up on the bottom of the stage. The green coloring of the pipes, which Nintendo late president Satoru Iwata called an uncommon color, came from Miyamoto having a limited color palette and wanting to keep things colorful. He added that green was the best because it worked well when two shades of it were combined<sup>[6]</sup>.

*Mario Bros.* also introduced Mario's brother, Luigi, who was created for the multiplayer mode by doing a palette swap of Mario.<sup>[7]</sup> The two-player mode and several aspects of gameplay were inspired by *Joust*.<sup>[8]</sup> To date, *Mario Bros.* has been released for more than a dozen platforms.<sup>[9]</sup> The first movement from *Mozart's Eine kleine Nachtmusik* is used at the start of the game.<sup>[10]</sup> This song has been used in later video games, including *Dance Dance Revolution Mario Mix*<sup>[10]</sup> and *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Ports and follow-ups

Despite its innovations, *Mario Bros.* was not a major success in North America due to the video game crash in 1983. It did however receive a number of home versions on the Apple II, Atari 2600, Atari 5200, Atari 8-bit computers, Atari 7800,<sup>[12]</sup> Amstrad CPC, and ZX Spectrum. The Commodore 64 had two versions: an Atarisoft port which was not commercially released<sup>[13]</sup> and a 1986 version by Ocean Software. The Atari 8-bit computer version by Sculptured Software, as well as the Apple II port programmed by Jimmy Huey of Designer Software, were the only home versions of the game to feature the falling icicles (the NES version omitted them due to space constraints on early NES cartridges). The latter conversion was not sold either.<sup>[14]</sup> The game was also rereleased on the Virtual Console service in North America, Australia, Europe and Japan for the Wii,<sup>[15]</sup> Nintendo 3DS and Wii U.<sup>[16]</sup> [https://www.nintendo.com/en\\_CA/games/detail/steaDexI7H4v0UEWC20wW3aIYAGW5bz](https://www.nintendo.com/en_CA/games/detail/steaDexI7H4v0UEWC20wW3aIYAGW5bz) It was also remade on copies of games in the Game Boy Advance's *Super Mario Advance* series<sup>[17]</sup> as well as *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*,<sup>[18]</sup> and it was included as a mini-game in *Super Mario Bros. 3*.<sup>[19]</sup> The Game Boy Advance version was included in the 10 free games given out by Nintendo in the 3DS ambassador program due to its inclusion on the cart for the GBA port of *Yoshi's Island* which was one of the games on the list. The game was featured among other games from the NES and SNES to be released for the 3DS on a tech demo called *Classic Games* at E3 2010, though it was never commercially released.<sup>[20]</sup>



Screenshot from *Mario Clash* (1995) for the Virtual Boy.

The NES version was included as a piece of furniture in *Animal Crossing* for the GameCube, along with many other NES games, though this one required the use of a Nintendo e-Reader, a Game Boy Advance accessory, and a North America-exclusive *Animal Crossing* e-Card.<sup>[21]</sup> This version was later re-released in the second series of NES e-Cards,<sup>[22]</sup> and was even re-released through the Famicom Mini series in Japan.<sup>[23]</sup> An improved port called *Kaette Kita Mario Bros.* (かえってきたマリオブラザーズ *Kaette Kita Mario Burazāzu*, lit. Mario Bros. Return) was released in Japan for the Family Computer Disk System, with added features and revisions to gameplay. It also featured cutscenes and even advertisements, being sponsored by the food company Nagatanien. *Kaette Kita* is very rare since it was only available as

a Disk Writer promotion.<sup>[24]</sup> A later NES port was released exclusively in Europe in 1993, called *Mario Bros. (Classic Series)*,<sup>[25]</sup> this version had a more refined control and stage intermissions closer to the original arcade version.

In 1984, Hudson Soft made two different games based on *Mario Bros.* The first was ***Mario Bros. Special*** (マリオブラザーズスペシャル *Mario Burazāzu Supesharu*), which was a re-imagining of the original *Mario Bros.* with new phases, mechanics and gameplay. The second was ***Punch Ball Mario Bros.*** (パンチボールマリオブラザーズ *Panchi Bōru Mario Burazāzu*), which featured a new gameplay mechanic involving punching small balls to stun enemies.<sup>[26]</sup> Both games were released for the PC-8801, FM-7, and X1 and have been described as average for the most part, neither the best or worst games in the series.<sup>[26]</sup> *Mario Clash*, a game released in 1995 for the Virtual Boy,<sup>[27]</sup> was developed as a straight remake of *Mario Bros.*, with the working title *Mario Bros. VB*.<sup>[28]</sup> It was the first stereoscopic 3D *Mario* game. The objective of the game is to knock all the enemies in a particular phase off ledges. Instead of hitting them from below like in *Mario Bros.*, the player must hit enemies using Koopa shells.<sup>[29]</sup>

The Wii U game *Super Mario 3D World* contains ***Luigi Bros.***, a version of *Mario Bros.* starring Luigi. This game will be unlocked if the Wii U console contains save data from *New Super Luigi U* or the player completes all normal worlds.<sup>[30]</sup><sup>[31]</sup>

On September 27, 2017 the original arcade version of Mario Bros. was released for the Nintendo Switch as part of the Arcade Archives series of emulated arcade machine games.<sup>[32]</sup>

## Reception

*Mario Bros.* was only modestly successful in Japanese arcades.<sup>[38]</sup> The arcade cabinets have since become mildly rare.<sup>[39]</sup> To date in Japan, the NES version of *Mario Bros.* has sold more than 1.63 million copies, and the Famicom Mini re-release of the NES version has sold more than 90,000 copies.<sup>[40][41]</sup> Despite being released during the North American video game crash of 1983, the arcade game (as well as the industry) was not affected. Video game author Dave Ellis considers it one of the more memorable classic games.<sup>[42]</sup>

Opinions on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) version of *Mario Bros.* have been mostly mixed, but does receive positive reviews from gamers.<sup>[36]</sup> However, in a review of the Virtual Console game, GameSpot criticized the NES version for being a poor port of the arcade version.<sup>[43]</sup> The Virtual Console version in particular was heavily criticized. GameSpot criticized it, saying that not only is it a port of an inferior version, but it retains all of the technical flaws found in this version. It also criticizes the *Mario Bros.* ports in general, saying that this is just one of many ports that have been made of it throughout Nintendo's history. IGN complimented the Virtual Console version's gameplay, even though it was critical of Nintendo's decision to release an "inferior" NES port on the Virtual Console.<sup>[36]</sup> IGN also agreed on the issue of the number of ports. They said that since most people have *Mario Bros.* on one of the *Super Mario Advance* games, this version is not worth 500 Wii Points.<sup>[36]</sup> The Nintendo e-Reader version of *Mario Bros.* was slightly more well received by IGN, who praised the gameplay, but criticized it for lack of multiplayer and for not being worth the purchase because of the *Super Mario Advance* versions.<sup>[37]</sup>

The *Super Mario Advance* releases and *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga* all featured the same version of *Mario Bros.* (titled *Mario Bros. Classic*). The mode was first included in *Super Mario Advance*, and was praised for its simplicity and entertainment value.<sup>[44]</sup> IGN called this mode fun in its review of *Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2* but complained that it would have been nice if the developers had come up with a new game to replace it.<sup>[45]</sup> Their review of *Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3* criticizes it more so than in the review of *Super Mario Advance 2* because Nintendo chose not to add multiplayer to any of the mini-games found in that game, sticking instead with an identical version of the *Mario Bros.* game found in previous versions.<sup>[46]</sup> GameSpot's review of *Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3* calls it a throwaway feature that could have simply been gutted.<sup>[17]</sup> Other reviewers were not as negative on the feature's use in later *Super Mario Advance* games. Despite its use being criticized in most *Super Mario Advance* games, a GameSpy review called the version found in *Super Mario Advance 2* a blast to play in multi-player because it only requires at least two Game Boy Advances, one copy of the game, and a link cable.<sup>[47]</sup>

## High scores

On October 16, 2015 Drummer by the name Steve Kleisath holds the world record on Mario Bros (Arcade) of 5,424,920 points verified by Twin Galaxies.<sup>[48]</sup>

On September 10, 2018 Adrian Rodriguez hold the world record on Mario Bros Japan (MAME) with a personal best of 5,474,030 points on highscore.com.<sup>[49]</sup>

## References

Reception	
Review scores	
Publication	Score
<i>AllGame</i>	<div><div><div><span></span><span>★★★★★</span></div><div>(Arcade)<sup>[33]</sup></div></div><div><div><span></span><span>★★★★★</span></div><div>(Atari 5200)<sup>[34]</sup></div></div><div><div><span></span><span>★★★★★</span></div><div>(Virtual Console)<sup>[35]</sup></div></div></div>
<i>GameSpot</i>	4.9/10 (Virtual Console)
<i>IGN</i>	<div>4.5/10 (Virtual Console)<sup>[36]</sup></div> <div>6/10 (e-Reader)<sup>[37]</sup></div>

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## External links

- [Official website](#) (in Japanese)
- [Official Nintendo Famicom Mini Minisite](#)(in Japanese)
- [Official Nintendo Wii Virtual Console Minisite](#)(in Japanese)
- [Official Nintendo 3DS eshop Minisite](#)(in Japanese)
- [Official Nintendo Wii U eshop Minisite](#)(in Japanese)
- [Official Nintendo Wii Minisite](#)(in English)
- [Official Nintendo 3DS Minisite](#)(in English)
- [Official Nintendo Wii Minisite](#)(in English)

- Mario Bros. can be played for free in the browser at the Internet Archive (ZX Spectrum version)
- Mario Bros. at the Killer List of Videogames

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